

Message Text

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20

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 OMB-01 /123 W

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R 080907Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8958

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: LIBERAL NEWSPAPER THREATENS TO CLOSE IF CENSOR-
SHIP GETS STRICTER

1. SUMMARY: IN MAJOR EDITORIAL STATEMENT OF FIRST
ANNIVERSARY OF EXISTENCE OF SUCCESSFUL LIBERAL WEEKLY
EXPRESSO, PAPER'S DIRECTOR HAS ANNOUNCED PAPER WILL CLOSE
IF CENSORSHIP GETS TOUGHER. END SYMMARY.

2. EXTENSIVE, FAR-RANGING EDITORIAL COVERING GROWTH OF
LIBERAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPER EXPRESSO APPEARS IN FIRST ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE, DATED JANUARY 5, EDITORIAL, WRITTEN BY EXPRESSO'S
DIRECTOR, FORMER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY FRANCISCO PINTO
BALSEMAO, R**OR*S EXPRESSO'S PRESS RUN WELL OVER 70,000
(BALSEMAO HAD PROGRAMMED PAPER FOR 35,000), WHILE ADVERTISING
INCOME IS OVER \$15,000 PER ISSUE (VS. EXPECTATION OF
\$5,000), EVEN THOUGH EXPRESSO, UNLIKE ALL OTHER MAJOR
PORTUGUESE PAPERS, REFUSES TO CAMOUFLAGE PAID ADVERTISE-
MENTS IN FORM OF NEWS STORIES. EDITORIAL POINTS TO
INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF PAPER AND ITS ACCEPTANCE
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AMONG ALL BUT EXTREME ELEMENTS OF PORTUGUESE POLITICAL

SPECTRUM. EDITORIAL THEN COMPLAINS OF STRUCTURES OF CENSORSHIP IN MOST EXPLICIT TERMS WITHIN MEMORY OF EMBOFFS.

3. AFTER APOLOGIZING TO "OUR 200,000 READERS" FOR NOT HAVING DROPPED ENTIRELY ARTICLES WHOSE MEANING HAD BEEN RENDERED UNRECOGNIZABLE BY THE CENSORS, EDITORIAL PLEDGES TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT FOR A "MORE DEMOCRATIC, MORE JUST, AND BETTER-INFORMED PORTUGUESE SOCIETY" WITHIN THE PRESENT LIMITATIONS OF CENSORSHIP. HOWEVER, EXPRESSO STATES, "IF THE TOURNIQUET TIGHTENS AND OUR RESISTANCE TO IT IS FRUITLESS, EXPRESSO WILL CLOSE. WE WOULD RATHER DIE STANDING, WITH THE RECTITUDE WE BELIEVE WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MAINTAINING, THAN WASTE AWAY WITHOUT HONOR OR MERIT".

4. ACCOMPANYING POLITICAL COMMENTARY, ALSO BY BALSEMAO, DETAILS SOME OF EXPRESSO'S PROBLEMS WITH CENSORS. BALSEMAO STATES THAT OF 35 POLITICAL ARTICLES WRITTEN FOR EXPRESSO BY LIBERAL OPORTO LAWYER FRANCISCO SA CARNEIRO (WHO QUIT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN FRUSTRATION LAST YEAR), NOT ONE APPEARED INTACT, AND MANY WERE CUT IN THEIR ENTIRETY (IN RECENT WEEKS, NOTHING BY SA CARNEIRO HAS APPEARED). AT SUGGESTION OF SA CARNEIRO (WHO RECENTLY TOLD EMBOFF HE FELT ARTICLES WERE FREQUENTLY CUT SOLELY BECAUSE OF HIS AUTHORSHIP), HE, BALSEMAO, AND TWO OTHER LIBERAL FORMER DEPUTIES WILL ROTATE IN WRITING WEEKLY POLITICAL COMMENTARY FOR EXPRESSO. (COMMENT: SA CARNEIRO'S ARTICLES HAVE BEEN UNCOMPROMISINGLY CRITICAL OF GOP). EXPRESSO AND OTHER PAPERS HAVE FREQUENTLY SOUGHT TO BYPASS CENSORSHIP THROUGH DIRECT APPEALS TO PM CAETANO OR OTHER MINISTERS, AND HAVE MET WITH SOME SUCCESS.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH COMPOSITION OF CENSORSHIP BOARDS REMAINS MIDDLE-LEVEL MILITARY, FOR MOST PART, PRESS MAY HAVE EASIER TIME WITH NEW SECSTATE FOR INFORMATION PEDRO PINTO, WHO HAS BEEN WOOING OPPOSITION PRESS. FACT OF PUBLICATION OF BALSEMAO'S CRITICISM OF CENSORSHIP APPEARS TO INDICATE IT IS EASING.
POST

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Message Attributes

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